

Corporate Parent Committee

28 November 2013

Present: Councillors Bell (Chair), Anand, Gulaid, Eileen Harris, Midha and Millican.

Also Present: Fostering and Adoption Representatives, Care Leaver Representatives, Looked After Children Representatives, David Archibald (Executive Director, Children and Adults), Cheryl Campbell (Team Manager, Horizons Centre), Carolyn Fair (Operations Manager, Children's Placement Services), Judith Finlay (Director Children and Families), Jude Fraser (Horizon centre staff), Yvette Grant (Leaving Care Team), Ian Jenkins (Youth Justice), Royanne Johnson, (Lead Mentor) Bridie McDonagh (Head of Behaviour Strategy and Inclusion & Virtual Head LAC), Sally Obado (Teacher Looked After Children Education Team), Marcella Phelan (Assistant Director, Planning Commissioning and Partnerships) and Carol Yates (Operations Manager Looked After Children and Leaving Care Team)

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillors: Bagha and Anita Kapoor.

Officers: Gary Odle (Project Manager, Horizons Centre)

2. Urgent Matters

There were none.

3. Matters to be Considered in Private

There were none.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 September 2013

Resolved:

- i. That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2013 be agreed as a true and correct record.
- ii. To note Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, had responded to a letter about the leaving care conference and shared Ealing's commitment.

6. Update from Junior Council (Verbal Update)

M (Junior Council representative) updated the Committee on activities undertaken by the Junior Council. There had been two meetings since September. The information pack for children coming into care had received positive feed-back from Looked After Children. A recent meeting of the Junior Council had discussed the role of a social worker by playing a game where the children would agree or disagree with statements about social workers. A social worker would be invited to the January meeting of the Junior Council to continue this discussion. One suggestion which the Junior Council had made was that

there should be role profile sheets about each social worker including a photograph to enable Looked After Children to find out more about their new social worker.

Junior Council would be holding an end of term fun event on 10 December and members were invited to join in. Members were also invited to the Junior Council meeting on 14 January to see the Junior Council interviewing a social worker.

The Committee thanked M for an interesting and informative presentation.

7. Feedback from the Horizons ShoutOut Forum (Verbal Update)

(i) Young Peoples Survey

Jude Fraser, Horizons centre staff, informed the Committee that members of the Horizons ShoutOut Council had taken part in training and had started the process of contacting the young people to complete the survey; to date 93 people had completed the survey and the survey would be open until mid-January. The on-line survey aimed to collect detailed information on young people's views to improve the support provided. It was open to Looked After Children placed in Ealing and out of borough.

(ii) Safeguarding Forum

Ealing was setting up a Safeguarding Forum for young people which would combine work with the youth services and would report to the Safeguarding Board Executive.

8. My Education Mentors Project Update (Verbal Update)

Royanne Johnson, Lead Mentor, B, A and S provided feedback on the mentoring sessions.

A launch party had been held to focus on building relationships and getting to know each other better. One to one sessions had included help with homework, CVs and application forms. There had been a psychology session looking at careers in psychology, including a meditation taster session and there was a visit to Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College.

Development opportunities included training for foster carers on appropriate support for homework.

Future sessions would include supervision, cooking, mentor led sessions, university trip to raise aspirations, careers session, sports, drug awareness, inspirational speaker, Christmas meal, Christmas trip and foster carer training.

9. Looked After Children Education Update

a) Half Term Update

Trip to Cambridge University

19 young people had attended a trip to Cambridge university as part of the Realise Programme to encourage Looked After Children to access university. Royanne Johnson described this as a fantastic aspirational day.

Trip to Brent Town Hall

This was a follow up trip to the Arvon residential writing week, which took place during the summer holidays.

Study Sessions at Horizons

Study sessions during the half term holidays were in addition to the regular Wednesday sessions and the 1:1 sessions with specialist subject teachers.

Poems written by Looked After Children at the Horizons Centre were currently exhibited at The Roundhouse in Camden as part of a Lemn Sissay exhibition of poetry by children in care.

b) Post 16 Results

Bridie McDonagh introduced the report updating members of the details for Post 16 Education results for the academic year 2012-13 and providing information on the current year 12 and 13 year groups. Detailed information could be found in the appendix to the report.

c) Ealing Virtual School, Looked After Children (LAC) Headteacher's Annual Report

Bridie Mc Donagh introduced this report which was the first annual report on the virtual school detailing the staffing of the LAC team, the work of the team, the direct work with young people, the progress impact of the LAC education team business plan, the attainment of the children and young people including educational awards, the student leadership committees, the pupil premium, extra-curricular and holiday activities, the work of the Horizons Centre and complaints.

The Committee welcomed the report and congratulated officers on their work. It was requested that the next annual report include school attendance and exclusions of Looked After Children and also information about Looked After Children with additional needs.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Parent Committee:

- i. notes the contents of the report.
- ii. requests that the next Annual Report of Ealing's Virtual School include details of school attendance, exclusions and information about Looked After Children with additional needs.
- iii. congratulates officers for their work on this report.

10. Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Annual report 2012/13

Carol Yates introduced this annual report updating the Committee on the performance of the Looked After Children independent reviewing service.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Parent Committee notes the contents of the report.

11. Missing from Care Report 2012/13

Carol Yates introduced the report informing the Committee on the processes and data in relation to children and young people missing from care in Ealing. The report highlighted the action taken to support young people at risk of becoming missing children and to minimise the safeguarding risks. The meeting was informed that unauthorised absences were not counted as missing from care.

David Archibald asked how Ealing compared with other boroughs in terms of children missing from care. This information was not available but from discussions with peers in other authorities, Carol Yates thought that the number of young people missing from care in Ealing was relatively low.

The Committee asked whether the social workers received support from the police or Salvation Army. It was noted that there was an excellent working relationship between the police, missing persons service and social workers. The Salvation Army had not been contacted but if a child was missing for a long period then this would be considered.

The Committee asked the ethnic breakdown of the children missing from care; Carol Yates agreed to provide this information to members after the meeting. Of the 7 children listed as missing from care, there were 6 different ethnicities.

The Committee asked if there had been concerns about the children missing from care being involved in other forms of exploitation. Carol Yates informed the Committee that there had been concerns about two young people in terms of being involved with fundamentalists but these concerns were unfounded.

Resolved:

That the Corporate Parent Committee:

- i. notes the contents of the report.
- ii. thanks officers for this useful annual report.

12. Report on the Implications of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) – Youth Detention Accommodation in relation to Looked After Children

Ian Jenkins and Yvette Grant introduced this report updating members on the implications of the LASPO, outlining to members the number of Looked After Children who have offended and informing members of the range of support available.

Councillor Gulaid asked about the success rate of interventions particularly in the Somali Community. Ian Jenkins indicated that interventions were working as the number of Looked After Children convicted of offences was declining. There was a Somali youth

group which had proved to be an excellent project, working with a number of agencies and parents to increase community awareness.

The Committee thanked officers for this enlightening report and looked forward to future updates.

Resolved

That the Corporate Parent Committee:

- i. notes the contents of the report.
- ii. thanks officers for this enlightening report.

13. Adoption Figures Briefing

Carolyn Fair introduced this report advising the Committee that the number of adoption orders had increased from 10 Adoption Orders in the whole of last year to 18 so far for this year. 13 adopters had been approved last year, so far 30 had been approved this year.

The Committee asked about the length of time it takes to adopt. Carolyn Fair replied that younger children were placed more swiftly for adoption and the length of time taken for an adoption was reducing but there were still improvements to be made.

Judith Finlay added that due to the increasing numbers of children being adopted, more post adoption support was required and this was a financial pressure on the Local Authority.

Resolved

That the Corporate Parent Committee notes the contents of the report.

14. Social Services Complaints Report on Looked After Children (July 2013 to September 2013)

Judith Finlay introduced this report.

Resolved

That the Corporate Parent Committee notes the contents of the report.

15. Management Information Summary – Looked After Children

Judith Finlay introduced this report providing a brief analysis on the April 2013 to September 2013 performance indicators for Looked After Children and Car Leavers. It was noted that the number of children placed for adoption within the timelines was now 75%, in the past this figure had been 100% but had reduced due to the volume of cases and complexity of the children's needs. In some instances the timeline had been missed by one day.

Resolved

That the Corporate Parent Committee notes the contents of the report.

16. Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on 20 March 2014 at 7pm at the Horizons Centre

Chair (Councillor Julian Bell)

The meeting ended at 8:50 pm